

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## ***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA***

***San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Carol C. Lam***

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***For Immediate Release***

### **NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - November 16, 2006**

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced the unsealing today of an indictment alleging that eight defendants were involved in a conspiracy to smuggle undocumented aliens from Mexico into the United States, using routes in east San Diego County. When pursued, the members of this organization typically fled from law enforcement agents, endangering the lives of the illegal aliens they carried and the public.

The indictment alleges that Cesar Rodrigo Corona-Garcia ran an alien smuggling organization that transported undocumented aliens from Mexico into the United States and then to the greater Los Angeles area, assisted by others acting as scouts and drivers. According to the indictment, the illegal aliens were guided on foot across the border to staging areas in east San Diego County. Scouts allegedly checked the area for the presence of Border Patrol agents and to determine whether the various Border Patrol checkpoints were operating. As directed by the scouts, drivers then picked up the illegal aliens, crammed into the beds and cabs of extended-cab pickup trucks and drove them north, typically along Interstate 15.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Valerie H. Chu, who is prosecuting the case, Genaro Tapia-Orosco was arrested on Tuesday, November 14, 2006, and arraigned yesterday before United States Magistrate Judge Anthony J. Battaglia in federal court in San Diego. Cesar Rodrigo Corona-Garcia and Antonio De Jesus Valerio were arrested yesterday and arraigned earlier today before Magistrate Judge Battaglia.

Following the execution of search warrants by federal agents on November 15, 2006, Jose Meza Silva and Jose Castillo, also believed to be associated with the smuggling organization, were arrested and charged in alien smuggling complaints. Meza-Silva was arraigned earlier today before Magistrate Judge Battaglia, Castillo is scheduled to be arraigned tomorrow at 10:30 a.m.. Felipe Corona-Garcia, also believed to be associated with the organization, has been charged with being a deported alien found in the United States and was also arraigned earlier today.

All defendants will next appear at detention hearings scheduled for Monday, November 20, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. before Magistrate Judge Battaglia.

United States Attorney Lam said, "We are striving to take down the upper ranks of alien smuggling organizations -- especially ones that routinely endanger lives."

The arrests represent the culmination of a year-long investigation jointly conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The U.S. Border Patrol also participated in the investigation.

"Human smuggling is a violent enterprise that puts migrants and entire communities at risk. We know from experience that greedy criminals involved in these organizations care about only one thing -- money. They are not concerned about the human cost," said Michael Unzueta, Special Agent in Charge for ICE Investigations in San Diego.

FBI Special Agent in Charge, Daniel R. Dzwilewski, commented, "The smuggling of illegal aliens and human trafficking not only poses a serious threat to our national security, but result in exploitation, suffering and death. The FBI and our law enforcement partners will continue to vigorously investigate, and disrupt these organizations to protect the United States from the dangers posed by these criminal enterprises."

**DEFENDANTS****Case Number: 06cr2415-BTM**

Cesar Rodrigo Corona-Garcia, aka “Orejon,” aka “Cuello”  
Genaro Tapia-Orozco  
Jose Lopez -Aguilar, aka Mario Lopez-Garcia, aka “El Chupacabras”  
Francisco Preciado-Martinez, aka “Billo”  
Miguel Angel Chavez-Lopez, aka “Coquena”  
Arnulfo Guzman-Lopez, aka “Licenciado”  
Antonio De Jesus Valerio, (Fnu Lnu), aka “Cholo,” aka “Toño”  
Carlos Guevara-Rodriguez, aka “Burro”

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES (Case Number: 06cr2415-BTM)**

Counts: 38

Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a) (2) (B) (ii) (Conspiracy To Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain);  
Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324 (a) (1) (A) (iii) and (v) (I) (Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens);  
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a) (2) (B) (ii) (Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain)  
Title 8, United States Code, Section 2 (Aiding and Abetting);  
Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324 (a) (1) (A) (iii) and (v) (II) (Transportation of Illegal Aliens and Aiding and Abetting);  
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a) (1) (A) (iii) and (v) (II) (Harboring Illegal Aliens and Aiding and Abetting); and  
Title 18, United States Code, Section 982 (a) (6) (Criminal Forfeiture).

Maximum Penalty: Twenty years’ incarceration; \$250,000 fine, three years of supervised release

**Related Cases:****DEFENDANT****Case Number: 06cr2160-DMS**

Jose Juan Martinez-Guevara

**DEFENDANT****Case Number: 06mg2095**

Jose Meza Silva

Jose Castillo

**Case Number: 06mg2096****DEFENDANT****Case Number: 06mg2093**

Felipe Corona-Garcia

## **INVESTIGATING AGENCIES**

Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Border Patrol  
Customs and Border Protection

**An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.**